

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2558

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10360

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR,UR,US,KN,KS

SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON KOREA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. MIKHAIL KAPITSA, CHIEF OF THE FIRST FAR EASTERN DIVISION OF THE SOVIET MFA, AND PERHAPS THE LEADING SOVIET AUTHORITY ON ASIAN AFFAIRS, REPORTEDLY TOLD A VISITING AMERICAN SCHOLAR LAST WEEK THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS KOREAN MATTERS WITH PRESIDENT FORD IF THE U.S. SO DESIRES. A VISITING U.S. SCHOLAR (PROFESSOR KIM OF GEORGE WASHINGTON) WHO JUST COMPLETED A WEEK OF TALKS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS AND SCHOLARS WHO DEAL WITH ASIAN AFFAIRS, TOLD US THAT KAPITSA MADE THAT STATEMENT FOLLOWING HIS (KIM'S) COMMENT THAT KOREA WOULD PROBABLY BE ONE OF THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA FOR JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER MIKI'S TALKS IN WASHINGTON AND FOR PRESIDENT FORD'S TALKS IN PEKING.

2. THE SOVIETS WITH WHOM THE SCHOLAR MET PORTRAYED KOREA AS
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"THE NEXT" POTENTIAL TROUBLE SPOT IN ASIA AND INDICATED

THAT MOSCOW MIGHT BE WILLING TO DISCUSS OUTSIDE GUARANTEES FOR KOREA. IF U.S. TROOPS WERE WITHDRAWN, MOSCOW WOULD "BE HAPPY" TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON KOREA AND WOULD BE WILLING TO RECOGNIZE SEOUL, THEY SAID. ACCORDING TO KIM, THE SOVIETS SEEMED ANXIOUS TO EVALUATE THE STABILITY OF THE SOUTH KOREAN REGIME AND THE FIRMNESS OF U.S. COMMITMENTS TO SEOUL.

3. THE SOVIETS HINTED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH SOUTH KOREA, BUT IMPLIED THAT SOUTH KOREA'S PUBLICITY OF PAST CONTACTS AND NORTH KOREA'S STRONG DISPLEASURE INHIBITED ANY MOVES IN THE DIRECTION. THE SOVIETS EXPRESSED STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE USE OF NON-PEACEFUL MEANS TO RESOLVE KOREAN QUESTIONS AND SAID THAT MOSCOW WOULD "MAKE EVERY EFFORT" TO SEE THAT NORTH KOREA WOULD NOT UNDERTAKE ANY MILITARY ADVENTURE. THE SOVIETS DID NOT RESPOND TO A SUGGESTION THAT THEY ENDORSE THE CONTINUED VALIDITY OF THE KOREAN ARMISTIC IF THE UNC IS ABOLISHED.

4. ON JAPAN THE SOVIETS WERE REPORTEDLY CONSUMED BY THE "HEGEMONY" QUESTION, WHICH THEY TREATED WITH STRONG EMOTION AND LITTLE RATIONAL OR COHESIVE ARGUMENT.

5. COMMENT: KIM SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED THAT HIS NAME NOT BE USED IN EMBASSY REPORTING BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF LEAKS. HE SHOULD THEREFORE BE STRICTLY PROTECTED. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD CONTACT UNNAMED U.S. OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON LATER FOR A MORE COMPLETE DISCUSSION OF THE VIEWS HE HEARD IN MOSCOW.

6. WE CANNOT EVALUATE KAPITSA'S REPORTED REMARK ABOUT SOVIET READINESS TO DISCUSS KOREA AT THE SUMMIT LEVEL, SINCE WE HAVE NOT YET HEARD IT DIRECTLY. THE CURRENT IMPORTANCE OF KOREA, HOWEVER, MAKES SUCH A SUGGESTION PLAUSIBLE IN OUR VIEW. ON THE OTHER POINTS, THE REPORTED SOVIET VIEWS CORRESPOND MORE OR LESS TO THOSE WE HAVE HEARD BEFORE. THE APPARENT EMPHASIS ON THE U.S. TROOP PRESENCE AS AN OBSTACLE TO SOVIET INITIATIVES SEEMS STRONGER THAN WE HAVE HEARD HOWEVER AND WE SUSPECT, IS IN FACT AN INDIRECT WAY OF SAYING THAT THE
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MOSCOW LINE WILL NOT STRAY VERY FAR FROM THE NARROW PATH CHARTED BY PYONGYANG.
STOESSEL

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NNN

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